



Illinois E-Health News

Illinois Office of Health Information Technology
Information for Patients and Consumers

Issue # 4

July 2012

Consumer Education Workgroup; Devoted to the Health IT Needs of Illinois Consumers

For health IT to succeed in Illinois, it is important that patients are actively engaged in their own health care.

The Consumer Education Work Group of Illinois Health Information Exchange is devoted to the health IT educational needs of consumers in the state of Illinois. The work group is collaborating with health organizations throughout the state to disseminate important information about health IT and the secure electronic exchange of patient health information between health care providers, and to their patients.

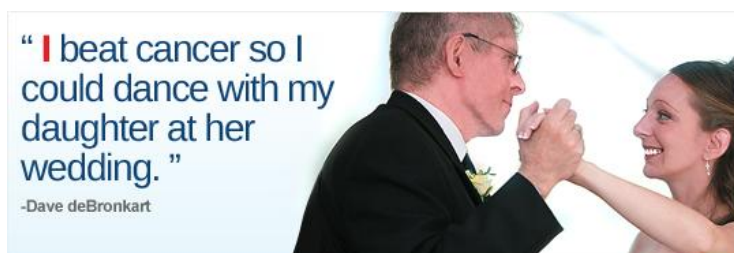
A primary goal of this group is to educate consumers about the benefits of health IT through real life stories and experiences. Such stories, like the ones below, can be a powerful tool for educating patients on how health IT can have a positive impact on their health and their lives. We would like to hear your story! Email Danny Kopelson at danny.kopelson@illinois.gov to share your personal experiences with health IT, and be a part of the effort to educate the people of Illinois about these exciting technologies.

“I Danced at My Daughter’s Wedding”

In 2007 Dave de Bronkart survived stage IV cancer with the help of information he found on an online network for cancer patients:

“My doctor prescribed a patient online community, www.acor.org, which is a network of cancer patients. Very quickly, these other patients told me about a treatment that occasionally works. Someone emailed me a list of four

doctors in my part of the country who offer this treatment, along with their phone numbers. It turns out that patients often know what other patients want to know. That’s the power of patient networks.





Illinois E-Health News

Illinois Office of Health Information Technology
Information for Patients and Consumers

Issue # 4

July 2012

I got two rounds of interleukin-2 two months apart, and the tumors started to shrink. A year and a half later, I was there when a magnificent young woman, my daughter, got married.

I almost died, and here's what I discovered: Patients are the most underutilized resource in all of health care. We have the power to improve health care through better quality information, delivered to the person who needs it, when they need it. It's my mission now to tell patients: Get involved – you have more ability to improve health care than you would ever imagine."

I Had More Time with My Father

Heidi Sitcov, R.N., is a nurse, but her most important recent interaction with the health care system was as a family member.

Heidi explains "My 85 year old dad had been complaining of abdominal discomfort, unusual fatigue and was just not feeling like himself. He went to his internist's group, seeing different doctors, getting different treatments and diagnoses each time. All while a malignant tumor was growing. Each doctor in the practice had their own idea of what was wrong yet they could only see the previous doctor's notes and not a complete medical history; that is, *if* they could find the chart.

After finally being diagnosed with advanced cancer, my dad was discharged home with a referral to hospice. I advised him to switch doctors and find one that used an integrated Electronic Health Record (EHR) system.

The immediate availability of his medical records among all his specialists allowed for better treatment and coordination of care. My parents were able to review test results quickly and they received an after-visit summary of every check-up. Most importantly, the Electronic Health Record (EHR) system ended redundant testing and procedures.

The Electronic Health Record (EHR) system benefited my father and family up until his last days giving him nearly four more years. I am at peace knowing that under the worst of circumstances, my dad received the best care possible."

And Then the Storm Hit

When the devastating Joplin tornado struck, Dottie Bringle, R.N. discovered that her hospital had been destroyed – but that all patient health records were safe because they had been stored on an electronic health record system:



Illinois E-Health News

Illinois Office of Health Information Technology
Information for Patients and Consumers

Issue # 4

July 2012



"I wasn't convinced – I knew that Electronic Health Records (EHRs) were important for patient safety, but thought that it would slow down patient care. Then the storm hit. [Paper] medical records were flying all over the community.

Having an Electronic Health Record system allowed us to:

- Account for all patients who were in our hospital fairly quickly after the tornado hit.
- Forward patient records to other facilities within two hours of the evacuation. This included previous and current medical histories.

This was especially important for our sister hospital, where many of our patients were transferred. It would have been difficult at best to help manage the care of our patients without Electronic Health Records (EHRs). Now I am an absolute believer!"

Health IT, A Change For The Better

Until now, relatively few Americans have had the opportunity to benefit from the use of health IT to enhance relationships related to their health. Now, health IT is becoming more common and - relationships with doctors, pharmacies, hospitals, and other organizations that make up a circle of care will benefit from this transformation. This transformation will enhance both your relationship with your providers and providers' relationships with each other.

Every Life has a Story; Share Yours!

Perhaps you too have a real life story about how health IT has had a positive impact on your health, your family's health and your life. If so, please share your stories with us. Together, through your stories, we can help educate others about the importance of health IT.

To learn more about electronic health information exchange in Illinois, visit www.hie.illinois.gov/. To learn more about electronic health information exchange nationally, visit www.healthit.gov

The Illinois Health Information Exchange (ILHIE) is a secure electronic network for sharing patient health information among health care providers in Illinois. With patient consent, the ILHIE will allow these providers to exchange electronic patient health information securely and in real time to improve health care quality and patient care.

"E-health - Better Care Through Technology"
